

The English Magazine

Auspicium melioris ævi

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Of Brown Beer, Opium and Prejudice

A VALUED correspondent (all our correspondents are valued, of course) wrote to us some little time ago to criticise our criticisms of the modern world. While not, I think, in disagreement with them, his point was that, as people who have seceded from that world, we are not in a position to criticise in detail such things as its "mass-media", its popular music and so forth. Particularly on the subject of the broadcasting services, we are admonished to the effect that in order to be in a position to judge them fairly, we should have to subject ourselves to a degree of continual immersion in them which would be unpleasant to us, and would probably leave us rather different in outlook than we are at present. Such an immersion would not, of course, "convert" us to the modern outlook, but it must certainly have a subtle effect upon us, and perhaps rob us of a degree of "innocence" and of some part of our sovereign mental independence of the world which those services represent—or better, embody, create, or even constitute. This, of course, is why we take the liberty of strongly advising our readers to detach themselves as far as possible from such influences, which cannot fail to produce subtle changes in even the most intelligent, independent and critical recipient. Again, in the case of modern popular music, how can we criticise it without knowing it well enough to understand it from within, rather than merely from hearing it as snatches of barbaric noise forced momentarily upon us in some public place? Are not such criticisms properly described as prejudices?

This argument (though I do not for a moment impute to it the slickness and dishonesty which might be implied by the comparison) is reminiscent of a rather neat double-bind dating from the time before the issue of pornography had been confused by the emergence of a leftist-feminist Puritan lobby, when all good progressives were unreservedly in favour of every species of smut. The double-bind went as follows: whenever some one had the hardihood to stand up in public and declare opposition to pornography, he would be asked by some smirking representative of the New (now obsolescent) Orthodoxy: "But have you your-

self at this moment in time [they used to talk like that] read a reasonable amount of pornography?" If the answer was "yes", the rejoinder was: "So you claim the right to read it and make up your own mind; how can you deny the same right to others?" If the answer was "no", the rejoinder was "Then how can you presume to condemn what you do not know?"

This line of reasoning, though accepted and repeated in good faith by many honest men, is entirely spurious. It is a sort of logical confidence-trick, rather like the neat methods of seeming to count out ten pounds in change when there are only eight, employed by unscrupulous market-traders. The trick resides in the misapplication of an argument and the begging of a question; in the treatment of a matter of principle as if it were a matter of taste.

Some years ago, the manufacturers of Guinness's Stout (a beverage so venerable that we feel justified in mentioning the brand name) issued an advertisement showing a bottle of the beverage accompanied by the following wording enclosed in inverted commas: "I've never tried it because I don't like it." This, as you will perceive, is another form of the same argument. The beer-maker is accusing those who reject his ale without trial of blind prejudice: and he is quite within his rights to do so (in terms of logic at any rate, if not in terms of courtesy) for whether or not one takes Guinness's Stout is (unless one has signed the Pledge) a matter of taste and not of principle. Apply the same argument to opium, however, or to arsenic, and you immediately see the fallacy. I have never tasted either opium or arsenic, but I have no hesitation in advising those over whom I have not authority, and commanding those over whom I have, not to take them. I am actuated not by prejudice, but by knowledge—by knowledge of what these substances are and what they do; and it is clearly a fallacy to suppose that such knowledge can only be attained by direct personal experience. That is true of matters of taste; but not all matters can be reduced to matters of taste. A proselytising opium-eater might say:—"But you have never tried it. If you tried it you might like it." To which the wise man

will reply:—"Indeed I might, which is all the more reason for not trying it."

Now modern popular music—and in particular, that variety of it called "rock"—is like opium, and not like Guinness's Stout. It is a species of music directed to the stimulation of the lowest elements in man's soul. Let us attend for a moment to the words of a liberal academic who has considered the matter deeply:

Young people know that rock has the beat of sexual intercourse. . . an enormous industry cultivates the taste for the orgasmic state of feeling . . . providing a constant flood of fresh material for voracious appetites. . . The words implicitly and explicitly describe bodily acts that satisfy sexual desire and treat them as its only natural and routine culmination for children who do not yet have the slightest imagination of love, marriage or family. This has a much more powerful effect than pornography on youngsters. . . A worldview is balanced on the sexual fulcrum. What were once unconscious or half-conscious childish resentments become the new Scripture. And then comes the longing for the classless, prejudice-free, conflictless universal society that necessarily results from liberated consciousness . . . These are the three great themes: sex, hate, and a smarmy, hypocritical version of brotherly love. Such polluted sources issue in a muddy stream where only monsters can swim. . . Nothing noble, sublime, profound, delicate, tasteful or even decent can find a place in such tableaux. There is place only for the intense, changing, crude and immediate which Tocqueville warned us would be the character of democratic art, combined with a pervasiveness, importance and content beyond Tocqueville's wildest imagination. . .

The phenomenon is both astounding and indigestible, and is hardly noticed, routine and habitual. But it is of historic proportions that a society's best young and their best energies should be so occupied. People of future civilisations will wonder at this and find it as incomprehensible as we do the caste system, witch-burning, harems, cannibalism and gladiatorial combats. It may well be that a society's greatest madness seems normal to itself. *

The case of modern broadcasting is similar if a little subtler; even though it may contain a few things which are civilised and decent, the medium (if we may borrow that term) as a whole is pervaded with the outlook, the *aisance*, the stench of the modern world. Quite apart from the content of this or that particular programme, there is the jargon, the pronunciation, the whole manner and bearing, the

* Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*. There are, of course, "softer" forms of modern music, but these are invariably pervaded by the loose, flaccid, soul-unstringing quality known (for the much-felt want of a better word) as *groosh*.

cast of face and the cast of mind of the extreme modern mentality; there is a world of implicit assumption in the entire style of presentation—in the use of image and colour and sound, which is immediately apparent upon comparison with older films or older wireless and television productions. And these things, precisely because they are subtle and implicit rather than overt and explicit, are more insidious in their influence than the actual content of the programmes. Even if conscious criticism and understanding were a defence against being subtly influenced—which it is not—these underlying effects move too quickly for such criticism to be possible; a few moments of sound and colour may be the result of half a day's work by a team of five men and would take a short essay preceded by serious consideration to analyse and expose.

Our contention is, that there is such a thing as the modern spirit, that this spirit is essentially corrosive of human warmth and traditional value, of order and of delicacy, of beauty and of depth; that this spirit is implicit in every note of modern music and every second of modern broadcasting; that it takes a thousand routes through the senses to the mind, both conscious and subconscious. The much-admired period-pieces produced by the British television companies, for example, which are often cited as something that is of positive good in modern broadcasting, always, in a hundred ways, place a modernist gloss upon the past—not merely an ideological gloss which may even, occasionally, be absent, but a stylistic gloss, reflected in stance, speech, mannerism, camera-angles, timing, and many other details, all of which subtly impart the modernist vision of life, even while seeming to impart—even while partially imparting—quite another vision. And one does not have to steep oneself in such productions in order to perceive this fact—on the contrary one perceives it all the more clearly and accurately when one does see only a few minutes of them with an eye which is normally steeped in the films of the 1930s.

Here indeed is another counter to the prejudice argument. It assumes that we must know a thing best if we are intimately acquainted with it; but that is only partly true: long exposure may deaden us to what is false or wrong in a thing; continual repetition may make the absurd seem commonplace, the outrageous seem respectable, the demented seem partly sane. As Professor Bloom says:—"This phenomenon is both astounding and indigestible, and is hardly noticed, routine and habitual." Of how many modern pheno-

mena might that not be said; and how many things which would in any other society be regarded as astounding, indigestible and quite mad are now accepted—however unwillingly—as commonplace, not because there has been any real shift in attitudes, but because the broadcasting services are monopolised by a tiny minority of grinning degenerates who have made it their life's work tirelessly to hammer out a selected round of insanities and inanities night after night, week after week, year after year after year. How, for example, could "anti-sexism" fail to be hooted off the stage of life except in a world dominated by the endless, unanswerable voice from the corner?

According to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, there is a certain class of phenomena which cannot be observed without the very fact of their observation altering the phenomena themselves. There is another class of phenomena which cannot be experienced at close quarters over a period of time without that very fact altering the observer. To the opium-eater who tells us that if we do not become addicted to opium, our opinion on the subject is worthless, we must reply that if we do become addicted to opium, our opinions on all subjects will be worthless. It would be stretching a point much too far to apply the same dictum to broadcasting and modern music, but in our view it is by no means an exaggeration to say that the opinions of one who remains unspotted of these influences are of considerably more value upon the matter than those of one who does not.

Yet even this is not the crux of the matter. The crux is an issue of principle. Let us return to the question asked of the opponent of pornography: "How can you condemn what you do not know?" The answer to this question is simple: If it is wrong to use literature and pictures for the abstract stimulation of perverted carnal desires, then it is wrong. One may, from a legal point of view, need to examine this or that work to determine whether it is pornographic, but the fact that pornography is wrong *per se* is a matter of principle. One may agree or disagree with that principle; but that is the principle upon which the opponent of pornography builds his case. It is not a matter of taste or of individual foible, but of whether pornography is right or wrong.

Our case is identical, only we are speaking of modernism rather than pornography. If modernism exists and is an evil, and if that spirit is inherent in modern music as a whole, and in modern broadcasting as a whole, then it follows that modern broadcasting and music

are carriers of evil. It is not necessary to examine every modern song in detail, nor every modern programme. If we know, for example, that Marxism is wrong in theory and evil in practice, then it is not necessary to listen carefully to the words of each individual Marxist theoretician before rejecting them. If we disbelieve in the principles of Calvinism, then it is not necessary to study the precise nuances of every Calvinist preacher before saying that we are in general disagreement with him. The Marxist might, of course, espouse traditionalist and aristocratic doctrines; but only by ceasing to be a Marxist. The Calvinist may come to believe in free will; but only by ceasing to be a Calvinist. Similarly, modern music might return to innocent rhythms and uncorrupting harmonies, but only by ceasing to be modern. Modern broadcasting may one day become a bastion of decency and truth and beauty and honour; but then it will no longer be modern broadcasting as we now understand the term.

There may seem to be the occasional exception. There may be the occasional piece of music which is at least inoffensive; there may be the occasional programme which is of real and unadulterated merit (although, the more one isolates oneself from the general pervasiveness of such things, the more glaringly obvious is the underlying corruption of even the most apparently-innocuous examples); but such exceptions are certainly rare and in any case, are not culturally modern—just as a contemporary traditional painting is not called *modern art*.

The word "prejudice", if used in its strict etymological sense, merely means the judgement of a thing before the event. It is a prejudice, in this sense, to say that the sun will rise tomorrow, or that the Winter will be cooler than the Summer, or that a babe of eighteen months is unlikely to write a treatise on binomial theorem which will have a European vogue. In this sense, and in this sense only, may it be called a prejudice to say that modern music and broadcasting are utterly corrupt without steeping one's senses in either one or the other.

We have no longer in any country a literature as great as the literature of the old world, and that is because the newspapers, all kinds of second-rate books, the preoccupation of men with all kinds of practical changes, have driven the living imagination out of the world. I have read hardly any books this summer but Cervantes and Boccaccio and some Greek plays. I have felt that these men, divided from one another by so many hundreds of years, had the same mind. It is we who are different.

W.B. YEATS

Sensibility**Thoughts upon Feelings**

*Extracts from a letter by the
young poet Louis Glendus*

ON the morning before I left, Miss Traill talked to me about Victorian sensibility, ladies swooning after receiving a shock, people going into high fevers and becoming delirious because of an emotional upset, men dying through wounded honour, and so on. This is exemplified by the characters in any 19th century novel (*Wuthering Heights* is an extreme example, but almost every novel would give one or two instances), who were sensitive to any number of things which would not be noticed by a modern beast-person, who felt more deeply and more 'passionately' the slightest changes in their moral or physical surroundings, or felt instinctively if anything were out of place. In the last century men would weep at a piece of music or a poem—today they would merely find it 'interesting' and identify it as a forerunner of something like 'Surreal-weirdo-ism'. Many men (though not all) were prepared to fight duels to defend their honour or promote a cause they believed in. The modern mind, which can never see the symbolic or spiritual significance of anything, cannot look beyond the bloodshed caused by duelling to the strength of character and magnanimity common in a society where many men would be prepared to die rather than have their honour tainted. "Death with honour is better than life with shame" as it says in *Le Morte d'Arthur*—but modern people understand neither 'honour' nor 'shame' and think that nothing is more important than physical survival. In fact they do not see how a person's moral or mental health can be more important than his physical health. The core of Victorian sensibility is that a person's health depended on his mental state—if he had suffered unhappiness or disappointment his delicate 19th-century health would be correspondingly affected. Today a person's happiness depends on nothing more than his animal health—'rude health' is an extraordinarily appropriate term—and the typical modern person thinks it is weakness to feel deeply over something.

In fact it is the modern world which is weak, because it does not feel. The Victorian world

was strong because it could feel the secret pulses of life, it could sense the special significance of the smallest things. It knew that the intensity of life, and not its duration, was the important thing. Of course not everybody in the Victorian age felt deeply—but in the modern age it is impossible for anyone to do so, unless they separate themselves from it. Everything is quick-moving, garish and shallow, like the electronic images which are everywhere, there is so much noise and movement and little scandals and cheap excitements that any one who knows no other life would find it impossible to have deeply-felt emotions on anything, to have any concerns which lasted more than a few moments. Nobody can put down roots, because the soil is too shallow. A person's heart can only mature "in silence and slow time"—he can only feel if he has an object for his feelings, something he can attach himself to, which will need to be firm and unchanging. Slower communications, a greater sense of tradition and an ability to concentrate and contemplate were the things which enabled the Victorians to feel, and thus to live. No wonder Catherine became delirious during Heathcliff's absences—in the isolation and profound concentration in which she had been reared, she had only one thing to fix her happiness on, and thus was more likely to be swayed from ecstasy to despair. Today she would feel nothing of this, as she could drown her sorrows in a television programme. No wonder Edgar Allan Poe was haunted by a series of "perfect women" so that his emotional turbulence eventually became too much for his health—he lived in an age when such ardent yearning was possible (in fact, fashionable). He did not have any of the innumerable modern half-pleasures to gratify (that is, to ruin) his feelings on. A modern person would say that at least these people would not be unhappy today—this is the fundamental error into which modern civilisation has fallen. They do not realise that one can only be happy—in fact, one can only live—if one is prepared sometimes to be unhappy.

Just as modern people cannot feel deeply, so they cannot think deeply. One of the reasons that I have thought about so many things (that it not an idle boast—sometimes I fear I shall be driven mad by all the ideas swirling around in my head) is because I have never had any interest in childish pastimes or television or anything else in which I could 'lose myself' (another appropriate term). To think, to use one's imagination, is one of the most vibrant ways of living—but for this one requires

silence and calm (and often solitude). All great works of literature require intense brooding and imagination—often to an excessive degree, but this is one of the prices exacted for the creation of works of genius. Modern people are afraid to think and thus afraid of silence. It amazes me how every time I enter a room with a modern type he immediately turns on some music—they are afraid of the things a silent room might inspire in them, or perhaps they are too impatient to wait for inspiration. This lack of depth in thought and feelings is what makes modern man so repellently hysterical and shallow-minded and facetious—paradoxically, greater emotional depth also creates greater self-control, which is what all modern people lack. To return to the image of the duellist—I know of nothing more noble than a man (whom I imagine to be elegantly dressed, and of stern and dignified features) prepared to face death because he has been wronged in some way, or because he wishes to uphold his honour—calmly confronting his opponent because his dignity and self-esteem are the most precious things he possesses, and he would rather die than feel himself unworthy, or that he has failed in his duty, or that he has shown any weakness of character or indignity of behaviour. Perhaps we have rather strayed off the point here, but I feel that all these things are bound up together—sensibility of feelings, profundity of thought, elegance of dress, correctness of etiquette and social rituals, an ordered and earnest society, all help each other together and provide for dignity, discipline, self-sufficiency, self-esteem, respect for tradition, and all those other qualities which the modern world despises and which we long to restore. None of these things can exist without a sense of ritual, that there is a "right way to do everything", which fosters the concept of honour. Some societies, such as ancient Rome and pre-industrial Japan, even provided a right and honourable way to die (ritual suicide, or *hara kiri*), by which means one could still maintain one's honour even if one had committed such irredeemable shame. Perhaps this was the origin of duelling, where one felt that if one's honour was in question (in other words, whether or not one had done the 'right things') one could appeal to destiny. Thus all of these things can only exist in a society which is organised to uphold them, which recognises the qualities of discipline and duty, which realises the symbolic importance of social etiquette.

Perhaps it is also because the modern man is "assured of certain certainties" that he

does not see beyond his immediate material well-being, he does not read an emotional or spiritual meaning into the events of his life (or if he does so, it is in a muddled, uncertain way), and thus he is rarely affected in an emotional way. One must recognise the emotional and spiritual sides of life before being able to suffer from them, and to have recognised them is worth any amount of sorrow.

Correspondence**American Citizenships**

MADAM, I have very much enjoyed the various pieces in which your contributors have criticised some of the awful words and phrases which have come into circulation in recent years. Perhaps I may be permitted to recommend one for addition to the Black List.

"Senior Citizen" must surely rank among the expressions which Romantics handle only with tongs. For one thing it is a twee euphemism invented by people who have no real respect for old age and wish to dress up what is to them an embarrassing reality in pimminy polysyllables (rather like calling a dustman a "refuse operative"). Romantics on the whole like old people except when they make themselves foolish by trying to be "up to date" and surely have no time for squeamish transatlantic euphemisms.

The other horrid thing about this expression is the use of the word "citizen" which is becoming far too prevalent these days. Britain is not and, thank God, is never likely to become, a republic. We are subjects, not citizens.

"Senior citizen" may not be quite as hideous as "sexist" or "Ms", but it has the same quality of being like a rubber nose—an artificial excrescence made up and grafted onto the language by a committee; and an American committee at that.

YOUR OBL. SERV. MR. T. IRVING

As you say, it is hard to imagine any Romantic using the term. Another expression which this brings to mind is "second-class citizen" which is not only horrid but is an interesting example of how the use of one word rather than another, which many people would consider insignificant, affects the entire way we think about the thing concerned. "Citizen" is laden with republican and egalitarian presumptions—a "second-class subject" would be an entirely different thing—a *marquis*, presumably; or perhaps, strictly speaking, the Lord High Chancellor or the second in line to the throne.

Books

The Romantic Bookman

by Miss Lucy Locket

I HAD thought of entitling this essay "A Review of Books", but that might have given you quite the wrong impression since it is not a review of any particular books but of books in general. I considered calling it "Notes on Books" but it was firmly impressed upon me in childhood that one should not write notes on books, unless, of course, one is very clever and famous, in which case they are called *marginalia*. So I have called it—well, you can see what I have called it by looking at the head of this page, which makes you rather wiser than I am, since I do not know what I will have called it. I am writing the essay first and naming it afterwards. But enough of this;—we do not want to get ourselves into a Time Paradox, now do we?

There are two things one can do with books, —leaving aside, as one should leave aside, all disrespectful and illegitimate uses;—viz. one can read them or one can look at them. In order to look at them one does not necessarily have to open them. Many books are very beautiful without being opened, but in order for this to be the case, they must be old. New books are rarely well-made or beautiful, and even when they are there is something pretentious and silly about the fact.

When considering what books to put in the cases in your drawing room, the ideal is to have no book published since 1939 and then to choose the prettiest. There is nothing philistine about this, it is simply good taste. You do not, however, buy books by the yard for looks alone. That would be philistine. Every book is a part of yourself or your friends or your family history. You will be judged by your books.

Speaking of judging, it has been said that one should not judge a book by its cover. As a metaphorical statement about people or circumstances this may be true. As a literal statement about books it is quite wrong. One must judge books by their cover. A book with the wrong cover is hardly readable, whatever may be the contents. I hate reading charming old books in modern paper-covered editions. However tasteful the cover may be (if one is lucky), it drips with modern smarminess. I once urged a friend to read a rather delightful book and gave her an edition produced by a notable Bolsheviſt publisher whose emblem is

an Arctic (or is it Antarctic?) bird. She tried on numerous occasions to read it and told me that it was really not her sort of book. Later I found a rather pretty turn-of-the-century edition. My friend read it the same night and was eloquent in its praise on the following morning.

I have another friend who collects printed bookmarks;—not rare ones, just the sort you can buy in shops for a few shillings. I recall her complaining to me of her wish to read some book. I asked her why she did not and she replied that she had lost her pre-Raphaelite bookmark;—"I have tried Walter Crane and a lovely one with pressed flowers, but the book is really unreadable without my pre-Raphaelite bookmark." Perhaps this is going too far, but it indicates how far externals may affect our reading. Lower-class people often say that they were put off Shakespeare by being made to read him at school. I suspect that they were really put off by reading him in ugly modern school editions or else in tightly-crammed Collected Works with tissue-thin pages.

My advice is to avoid paper-covered books altogether if possible. Some say that they cannot afford not to buy paper books. I recall several friends in Oxford who could not afford to buy paper-covered books. Their entire libraries came from jumble sales or from second-hand shops which did not have sawdust on the floors only because their owners lacked the finer instinct for doing the thing properly;—and very handsome libraries they were. To have paid the full price for a new paper-covered edition would have been considered a gross extravagance.

If one must have paper books for reference or for other purposes (and the present writer cannot plead Not Guilty), *shut them away somewhere*. One does not mind you doing the thing so much provided you do not tell the truth about it.—And when you find a decent edition, do the decent thing and give the old one away to the deserving poor.

By a decent edition, I do not mean anything necessarily rich and rare, only one which does not have the odour of modernism clinging to it and mocking that which is within by that which is without.

You will not, it goes without saying, have what are called coffee-table books placed in your hall or drawing room (neither, it is to be hoped, will you have a *coffee-table*). You might put out an ornate edition of *Every Girl's Annual* with gilded leaves and birds still bright on the cover. Equally, you might not, since many Romantics are reticent about putting out books at all and only do so when they have just been

reading them, or at any rate under that pretence. Glossy magazines, like *Country Life*, of course, are not put out. If you have them they hide with the paper books. What about the dear old *Romantic* and the *English Maggie*? Even the charming new *New Century*? Well, they are small and are designed not to look out of place in a Romantic ambience, but even so the purist mutters. On the pretext of having just been reading seems a wise rule. They can be kept in the bookcase for family and guest reading. When there are more of them they can be bound and acquire the status of *Every Girl's*.

Reference books are of great importance. First of all one must have a dictionary;—preferably several. Above all *do not use an up-to-date dictionary*. Modern lexicographers have been stuffed with the most dreadful ideas and modern dictionaries are quite unsound. The *Concise Oxford* is probably the commonest little dictionary and this was sound up until about the mid-'60s. Get a second-hand edition from before this time and you are safe. Ideal choices are a full set of the O.E.D. pre-'60s (like the Catholic Church, the Oxford Dictionary could be trusted when all about it was crumbling until it suddenly gave way and crumbled itself;—curiously, both institutions gave way at much the same time); or something like the *Imperial Dictionary*, one of the earliest big English dictionaries, in an edition from the 1860s to the turn of the century. An old encyclopædia is a good idea—it will allow you to find out about most of the things you will want to find out about. An old atlas is essential, if only to find out what places like "Thailand" and "Iran" are really called (Siam and Persia respectively, by the bye). They will also tell you what county a town is in when you are only told the new "administrative area" (these have not legally replaced the counties, despite much propaganda to the contrary). An old gazetteer is especially good for this latter purpose, and can be acquired for next to nothing.

Pay great attention to the reference section of your library. As a friend recently said:—"knowledge is power,—but only when it is out of date." To put it less paradoxically: if you wish to know about specifically modern things you are probably not reading this; if you wish to know about abiding things you do not want a modern gloss put on them. Old textbooks are not necessarily infallible, but their prejudices, when one does not share them, are more obvious and less offensive.

On the subject of fiction, an invaluable piece of advice is to look out for unknown books. Not

only will you pick these up very cheaply in second-hand shops, but you will find untold felicities. The great authors delight, of course, but often the forgotten books which were popular in their day convey more exactly the spirit of their times. A great author is never wholly of his time (which is perhaps why there are no great authors in this most time-serving of all times—or if there are they are unheard of and very likely unpublished, and will be discovered in the next century); a lesser author almost always is. If one wishes to breathe the spirit of an age, therefore, one must go to the lesser authors. For the early-Victorians among you, for example, Disraeli,—whose novels are remembered only because he was a politician,—is an excellent choice. Consider also Mrs. Henry Wood, Mrs. Oliphant, Charlotte M. Yonge, Maria Edgeworth and—oh, the list is endless. Well, not literally. Well, literally, actually, because I am not going to end it.

I am tempted to go on to the eminently Romantic subject of reading aloud, but I see that this essay is already becoming rather longer than it should be; so I shall put down my final full-stop and begin thinking of a title.

Helpful Hints

Naming Sunny Money

THE naming of the coins of the realm can sometimes seem to be a problem to Romantics. Not, I mean the *real* coins of the realm which we use in our clubs, but the bongo-money which we are sometimes obliged to use in native shops. Here then is a simple guide to idiomatic usage. "5p" is, of course, a shilling and "10p" a florin or two-shilling piece. "50p" is a ten-shilling piece.—Not, be it noted, a "ten shilling coin"; this use of the word "coin" is quite unidiomatic and its native use for the new sovereign just shows how successfully the introduction of bongo-money has been in its aim of alienating the English from their natural idioms and robbing them of their sense of home and tradition;—who in his right senses ever spoke of a "shilling coin" or a "threepenny coin"? Only visiting foreigners with a poor grasp of spoken English.

Naturally, then, the sovereign is a sovereign, never a "pound coin". Pound piece, if you *must*, but sovereign is preferred.

"20p" is a double-florin, or four-shilling piece ("four-bob bit" if you want to be slangy, which I trust you do not).

Using the simplified doubling calculation

"2p" is worth 4d and is therefore called a groat—the old 4d coin. How nice to have it back.

"1p", worth 2d, is popularly called "a queer" from the expression "queer as a tuppenny bit"—also, perhaps, because it is the fundamental unit of the queer money.

I hope I have not missed anything out. I hardly ever use the stuff myself. But now, at least you can use it with confidence.

Macaronics

A French Refson from Mademoiselle Aline Geſte

HERE is something rather like Miss Prism's quiz, though perhaps of a more decidedly educational nature—or perhaps not. One of our readers, the charming Mlle. Geſte, is a scholar in some of the more recondite branches of mediæval French verse. She has kindly supplied the following examples of a rather distinctive *oeuvre* written in the manner of the Oise poets, of whom, as she tells us, next to nothing is known. "What is known is that their grammar was distinctive and that the genders of words were not always the same as in the other regions of France. I have supplied translations into English which may or may not prove helpful. The French is to be read out loud in your very best accent. If I have done my job properly, you will then be treated to a hidden meaning of much beauty and wisdom."

Readers who think they have plumbed the inner meanings of these rather curious verses may write to Miss Prism; the secrets will be divulged to all in our next number.

*Ce côte Zoué viva! Laisse boue laide.
Ce côte sombre Russe à s'oeuf on l'aide.
Ou elle, comme tu, y or gorille Bède
Or tu vis coterie.*

How lovely this Zoué coast! Leave behind the ugly mud (of Oise).

We will help this dark Russian coast become (as beautiful as) an egg.

Otherwise, she, like you (following reference to the golden gorilla of the Venerable Bede is obscure).

Well, you live too clannishly.

*Y te Oise m'ainé ans dominés ailleurs à Gheau
Y n'acquis ne dôme. Baillez ici.*

Date aimée d'aine d'ère lit vide—où me humer non.

Baille de n'âme. Au fane à belle lit.

Oh my older brother of Oise, who for many years ruled elsewhere at Gheau.

You never built a cathedral there. [Therefore] yawn here.

From that time beloved of the lap, now to the era of the empty bed—breathe not [those thoughts] upon me.

Yawning may risk the soul. [Therefore] go to your fine bed of carrot-tops.

Sans sept endives un nain se tare.

En douanes que lire, colle fourmi.

An de mes ères binôme eau n'y n'oeuf Zabar

Vième ail pou t'a Août tout-ci.

Without his seven endives a dwarf is crippled. What is he to read in the customs house, with ants in the glue?

In this year of my binomial eras, there is water but not one egg of Zabar.

[However] in August your Viennese garlic attracts all these lice.

Halles oùais, te! Jean t'y allouer te.

Ah, lunette! Je tape lumière.

You're using that word oùais from the marketplace! Jean taught you that.

What a spectacle you are! I'm putting out the lights.

Gelée qu'on part si tu as seau mûr cédé.

Zouärt, Maure. L'eau vile y en demur, teint pirate.

Beouf viande d'ou Cheik de dard ligne boude semer!

En de saut mur. Ces lieux-ce hatent tôle touchent, heurtent. Aidez-te!

We have muck to deal with because you left behind this old bucket.

Avaſt, Moore! Foul water remains (because of you), Pirate Face.

Beef steaks in line with the Sheik's lance will make you pout! (A powerful oath of obscure origin.)

Leap the wall. These dregs (in the bucket) are coming your way quick. Watch out!

THE adoption of democracy as a form of Government by all European nations is fatal to the government, to liberty, to law and order, to respect for authority and to religion, and must eventually produce a state of chaos from which new world tyranny will arise.

The DUKE of NORTHUMBERLAND, 1931
DEMOCRACY is necessarily despotism.

IMMANUEL KANT, 1795

Native Affairs

Tales from Babylon

by Sparrowhawk

OUR reviewer's comment in a review of *The Good Manners Guide*—away back in the second issue of this volume—to the effect that, with the decline of chivalry, women have become the subjects of brutish abuse by men, has attracted some criticism as being "unfair to men". It may perhaps help if we quote the passage from the book (contributed by Miss Mary Kenny) which led to this comment:

"Surveys by *Woman's Day*, *New Woman*, *Glamour* and *The Journal of Marriage and the Family* came up with findings in a similar vein [to those of a report being discussed]: that women are deeply dissatisfied with modern men.

What appears to have happened is that the carapace of chivalry which once restrained the more brutish aspects of male chauvinism (sic), has been removed, and what emerges is the rampant, uninhibited male, encouraged on all sides to think that females are there for the taking. I have been sceptical, in the past, of claims of sexual harassment; it was, I thought, simply a new word for flirting.

But young women insist that flirting has gone, along with manners, kindness, consideration. Courtship has gone: love-letters have gone: romance has gone. The commercialisation of sex has turned it into just another recreational commodity [passage containing gross vulgarity deleted] [which] has about as much romantic content as a football game."

I do not think this is unfair. It accords perfectly with what I have heard elsewhere, though I am glad to say, I have had no personal association with people of this sort. What it is is one-sided. There are just as many legitimate complaints which might be made on the part of men about modern girls as *vice versa*.

If one were to be blunt to the point of crudeness, one might say that modern girls may well be grateful even to be misused. In my rare excursions into the modern city, I can scarcely remember seeing a modern girl whom any young man with an atom of taste or refinement would wish to touch with a ten-foot la ge-pole. It is unsurprising then, that the men who do pay court to them are men without such an atom; or men who have crushed all such atoms in the process of steeling themselves up to the task of finding such creatures attractive.

Vice versa, of course. I am sure no girl of sensitivity ever finds out whether the modern

young man has manners or not. She takes one look at him and invests in a Dobermann Pincher.

The others—the girls who are not appalled by his flaccid face, his deplorable clothes and his cretinous tastes in "music"—complain that he treats them as a cheap commodity.

The obvious comment, of course, is "what did you expect"? There is another aspect to the question. When a woman, under the influence of the drab, mindless ideology of neutered "equality" which pervades all but the most inspired and free-minded members of her sex at present, is devoid of all delicate romance, all elegant majesty, all charm and gentle refinement; when her voice, her movements and her thoughts alike are coarse-grained and unsculpted, then what else is she but a cheap commodity? There are many higher and better ways for a man to regard a woman; but she makes all of them impossible. The modern woman is something to be endured rather than adored. She is a cheap, functional gift in a tawdry packaging. Romance, reverence, admiration, protectiveness and even love in any worthwhile sense of the word are all alike impossible.

I do not blame the modern woman. She is not responsible for her conditioning, and even if she were a delightful, romantic creature, the world would have no place for her. The modern man is easily as ugly as she is. Neither of them is to blame.

What is to blame is the entire rotten system which has destroyed everything human and valuable in the creation of a "rational" economic world; the stupid, endlessly-prattling clatterbrains of the "mass-media", the strutting, censorious Pinkshirts who have destroyed every last vestige of romance and humanity in the name of their heartless, soulless, worthless ideologies. What is to blame is a world which is no longer fit for men or women to live in.

Rather a bleak place to end; so I won't. The other day, I met a young Romantic man who told me he was in love. The girl I know a little. She is a charming, immaculate young creature. One of the little generation of young Romantics. "I worship her," he said, "but I know that I can never be worthy of her." That is how a young man ought to feel; and he ought to have at least some semblance of a cause to feel it. Without that there is—well, we have just seen what there is.

It is not easy for a young Romantic to find the girl of his dreams or the man of hers. The Romantic world is small and fragmented. But at the present it is the only place in which real

life—as opposed to the paltry parody which the mad modernist ironically calls “reality”—life as the poets of a hundred centuries have known it; life as every young man and woman of spirit and sensibility has known it—the real life of the human heart and soul—continues.

Pause for Thought

Sunday Best

by the Rev. Andrew Phillips

THERE was a time when the term “Sunday best” was widespread and well-known. It meant quite simply dressing up to go to church. Today of course the term “dressing up” is not heard very often either, rather one hears of “dressing down”. This is an expression alien to the Christian who holds Tradition dear, for he looks up to Heaven, to “the hills whence cometh his hope”, not down to the abyss of black despair.

One may wonder why so much of the spirit of Sunday has been lost. Indeed the spirit today seems to be that of “Sunday worst”. A finger points directly to many so-called Christian “leaders” who decided to do away with a “uniform” for the clergy. (Imagine if some leading surgeon decided to do away with the doctor’s white coat, or if a general decided to abandon army uniform, or an admiral wished to drop the sailor’s smart turn-out, what would have happened then?) Abandoning the clergy’s uniform meant first sending all those wonderful, hand-embroidered vestments to museums. The next step was to abandon the cassock, and then abolish the dog-collar which replaced the cassock. From here, of course, they went down all the way to the long-haired guitar-strumming “vicar” or “priest”, whose idea of the Church blatantly contradicted everything in the preceding nineteen-and-a-half centuries. With these examples of sacrilege before them, the laity followed and now “Sunday best” is supposed to be old-fashioned.

Sunday best means giving the best of yourself to God. This is outwardly expressed in one’s clothing. In some countries it is, thank Heavens, still the custom in the villages to dress in the local folk costume in order to go to church. This costume can be elaborate, for example it may change slightly according to the liturgical season, so that one wears something of a particular colour or at least a new article according to the feast. The women of

course always cover their heads in church in obedience to the commandment of the Apostle Paul (I. Cor. II, 5).

Sunday best is still observed today by those who hold fast to sacred traditions and those who hold the Church’s calendar dear and live according to it. Let us pray that the new millennium will see a return to the rhythms that have lasted two millennia so far. Indeed, I think we can safely say it, if there is no return to the Church’s calendar and way of life, then the calendar of the new millennium will be the calendar of Armageddon. For when Sunday best has altogether disappeared, so will have Sunday.

Correspondence

Mixed Marriages

MADAM, I was much impressed by your recent series on the subject of courtship, containing, as it did, so much valuable help, advice and information upon a subject of which the modern world seems to know and to understand so little. How curious that the present age should pride itself upon its supposedly “superior psychological knowledge” when it has forgotten those things which lie at the very roots and wellsprings of human emotion and human happiness.

One piece of advice which was not given—perhaps it seemed too obvious, or perhaps it seemed out of place—I think ought to be mentioned, for it is something which, in my experience, has caused a great deal of difficulty and unhappiness to the unwary. It is simply this:—Do not marry some one who is not a Romantic, or at any rate a sound, heart-deep traditionalist, however pleasant or darling he or she may seem, however little alternative there may appear to be. I speak not from personal experience, but from knowing a number of individuals who have married very nice “outsiders”. In their cases, it was almost unavoidable, as the marriages took place before such ideas as Romanticism really existed in any definite form; but in each case the result has been rather sad—sometimes leading to a destruction of the marriage itself, which is hideous (only the staunchest of traditionalists are really secure from such destructions in these days); more often, as the Romantic partner has begun to discover a kindred world, he has found himself sadly divided and been unable fully to live as a Romantic because of his native attachment. This is not fair either to one partner or to the other. Sometimes the native partner becomes enchanted by the Romantic

world, but with so many boisterous modernist influences penetrating everything, including the home itself, and with the Romantic world so little and fragmented and frail as yet, that is not common.

It is easy to think that there are other considerations than Romanticism and traditionalism when choosing a life-partner. Of course there are. But to choose one who is unsympathetic to so fundamental a part of one’s being (a lack of sympathy which will be easily glossed over in the early flush of love, but which will be drawn out more starkly by passing years) is to lay up troubles for the future and to create the conditions for an isolation profounder than that from which one was trying to escape. Let there not be another lost generation.

I am, madam,
YOUR SERVANT, MISS M. MARTINDALE.

SHELMERDINE

BY MISS PRISCILLA LANGRIDGE

CHAPTER VII

ROUGH JUSTICE

Miss TaviStock was grave. “Alison Clarke, Dorothy and Caroline Fielding, Shelmerdine Bingham. I am not going to beat about the bush. All four of you are well aware that that VI form piano is not permitted to be touched by any girl who is not studying for the senior music examination. All of you, except perhaps Shelmerdine, know that I take a very serious view of any violation of this rule.

“But you did rather more than simply touching or playing the instrument, did you not? You removed it from its place and conveyed it in an old and rickety motor van over a mile from the School. The surface has been chipped in a number of places and it will certainly need retuning. It is not possible yet to say whether any more serious damage has been done. Have you anything to say in your defence?”

“Please, Miss TaviStock,” said Dot. “It was Caroline and I who were wholly responsible. We asked the others to come with us, but they knew nothing of what we had done until we actually got there.”

Angry as she was, Miss TaviStock was always fair-minded. She realised that if what Dorothy said was true—and while she was a madcap, she was certainly not a liar—Alison and Shelmerdine could have done little other

than they did without breaking the schoolgirl code against sneaking. They should not, of course, have absented themselves from the church procession, but they had already been punished for that.

“Alison and Shelmerdine, did either of you touch the piano?”

“Yes,” replied both.

“Did you play it?”

“No.”

“What did you do with it?”

“We helped to get it back to the School without being seen,” said Alison.

“Then you may go.”

The next quarter of an hour was one of the most uncomfortable that the twins had ever endured. It built up to the following economic but very effective climax:

“You will both be caned; you will have detention every Saturday afternoon until half-term and you are gated until further notice.”

“What I want to know,” said Dot in the Common Room, “is how on earth we were found out.”

“Yes,” said Carrie. “If Miranda had guessed she would have reported us straight away; and anyway, she couldn’t have known as much about it as Miss TaviStock did.”

“Somebody must have told her,” said Alison. “That is the only possibility.”

“Well, we haven’t told a soul about it, have we, Carrie?”

“Certainly not. What about you, Alison?”

“Not a word to anyone.”

“And Shelmerdine?”

Shelmerdine’s mouth was set firmly. “I have told no one except Flavia Randall.”

“What!” exclaimed Carrie.

“You told Flavia Randall?”

“Flavia Randall of all people!”

“What do you mean, ‘of all people’?” demanded Shelmerdine.

“Well, she isn’t even one of the chaps,” said Dot.

“If she had been one of the chaps she’d have told the whole form,” said Shelmerdine.

“So instead she has just told Miss TaviStock,” retorted Dot coldly.

“Bilge,” said Shelmerdine.

“Bilge yourself,” said Dot. “What do you know about Flavia Randall? You’ve only just arrived. She’s a queer fish and she must be on some sort of special terms with the Head. She has her own room, you know. Nobody in the Third has ever been allowed that. Of all the people you might have told you picked the absolute worst.”

"Bilge," reiterated Shelmerdine. "You shouldn't have done it," said a reproachful Carrie. "We promised not to tell any one."

"I'm sorry," said Shelmerdine stiffly.

"Being sorry isn't enough," stormed Dot. "A gentleman's word is her bond."

"We didn't pledge our word in that way."

"Oh yes we did."

"No more than we did over the Hope Carington Cup, and that got all over the form at the time when I didn't know anyone else to tell."

"But this was much more important."

"But no more or less a matter of honour."

"Are you questioning our honour, Bing-ham?"

"Are you questioning mine, Fielding?"

"Can you fence?"

"No."

"Bother. Then I can't challenge you."

"I can shoot," said Shelmerdine dangerously.

It took some courage for Alison to intervene, but courage was not a thing she lacked. "Stop it, both of you! Shelmerdine is right. We did tell people about the Cup when we said we wouldn't. It isn't a matter of honour. Nobody needs to be mortally offended. Of course she shouldn't have spoken to Flavia Randall, but remember she hasn't been here a month yet. She couldn't possibly have known this might happen. Now are you two going to shake hands, or do Carrie and I have to fetch jugs of water to separate a pair of fighting cats?"

The antagonists continued to glare at one another, but rather uncertainly now.

"I'll fetch a jug of water from my wash-stand," said Carrie with as light a laugh as she could manage. As Alison had guessed, she did not like this row and wanted to end it. The defection of her twin took all the fight out of Dot. If Carrie wanted to make peace, so would she. She thrust out a hand.

"Sorry, old thing. I'm given to tantrums every now and then. Family failing."

"No worse than mine," said Shelmerdine, grasping the hand warmly. She suddenly realised how much she would have hated to lose the friendship of the twins.

Shelmerdine knocked on Flavia's door. She was now quite resigned to the idea of their regular sessions after prep. Normally the door opened immediately to reveal a shining, eager little face. Today Shelmerdine waited nearly half a minute and the face when it appeared was drawn and deathly white.

"Why, Shorty, what on earth's the matter?"

Flavia said nothing, as if she did not trust herself to speak. She stepped aside to let Shelmerdine pass into the room, and then closed the door firmly behind her.

The room looked like a grotesque parody of the familiar little haven Shelmerdine had visited last night. The pictures were all turned to face the wall or else hung upside down. The bedclothes were on the floor in place of Flavia's little Persian rug. The rug was hung up at the window in place of the curtains. The bookshelves had been emptied and Flavia's books had been piled up into a great pyramid on the bare mattress. The velvet curtains had been draped over it and it was crowned with the vase of flowers from the top of the bureau. The bureau itself lay open and all the little drawers and compartments in which Flavia so carefully arranged all her things had been emptied to create a jumbled mess piled up on her big leather-covered blotter.

Shelmerdine surveyed the room carefully. Somebody had certainly "ragged" it with admirable thoroughness; but she was pretty sure, on first glance, that nothing had actually been damaged. Even the ink pots, though precariously balanced on top of the pile in the bureau, were closed, upright and full. Shelmerdine moved them onto a safer surface.

"It's alright, Shorty. It looks a mess, but there's no real damage. We'll have to scratch tonight's study, of course, but I can promise that by the time you snuggle up, everything will be just as it was."

"But—you don't—under—" Flavia had been right not to trust herself to speak. Now that she tried she found that she only opened the gates for a flood of awful, shuddering sobs. Shelmerdine put her arms around her, feeling tall and strong and protective.

"Understand? Yes, I do." She understood all too well that what mattered so terribly to Flavia was the violation of her sanctum. She had never really come to school at all. She had simply moved her life from wherever she had been before into this room. It represented not merely privacy to her, nor even security. It was something more than that. No other girl had ever been inside it until she met Shelmerdine and now what had happened was to her a terrible, terrible violation of her very being. Whoever had done this can have had no idea of how dreadfully it would hurt Flavia. Nobody in the world knew that except Shelmerdine; and nobody had asked her. To them it was just an everyday rag and probably far less than Flavia deserved for the crime of which she had been convicted without trial.

Shelmerdine's promise was not fulfilled. The room was not back in order by bedtime. For nearly three quarters of an hour, she could do nothing but nurse Flavia through torrent after torrent of bitter, convulsive weeping. They had only time to make the bed and restore the scantiest semblance of order before Last Bell.

* * *

Mademoiselle was down with a slight chill the next morning and, the first lesson being French, the Third Form had a period of unsupervised reading, which was lucky for Flavia. She arrived some minutes late, having slipped back to her room after prayers to finish the superficial tidying of her room to a point where her bed-maker would not notice anything amiss.

As she entered the room, the air was filled with a low hissing sound, which continued steadily as she made her way down the aisle of desks to her place. At last her nerves, sorely frayed by last night's events, gave way. She turned to Viola Dunwoody, who was usually quite friendly to her.

"What is the matter? Why are they hissing me?" Viola stared through her as if she was not there.

"I believe Flavia asked you something, Viola," drawled Shelmerdine. "Have you no manners?"

"She's in Coventry," said Viola.

"I don't recall the form deciding that," said Shelmerdine.

"It didn't need to," said Alison. "No decent girl will speak to her now."

Shelmerdine sprang to her feet, seized Flavia's wrist and strode with her to the front of the class. Taking the mistress's place, she turned to face the form.

"In England a chap is counted innocent until proven guilty," she said. Nobody said anything. "If you want to send Flavia Randall to Coventry, you'll have to send me with her."

"But why?" asked Carrie despairingly.

"Because she is my friend." It was the first time in her life that Shelmerdine had acknowledged someone as a friend.

"You will have to choose between Flavia and us," flashed Dot.

"Wrong," said Shelmerdine. "I have chosen."

"Why, Shelmerdine? Why?" implored Carrie as she strode back to her place. Shelmerdine looked through her without answering but Carrie did not fail to see the sadness in her eyes. She was not acting in anger as she had done yesterday. She was doing what she felt she must.

The rest of the day was intolerably dull for Shelmerdine. Ironically it was she alone who really suffered from being in Coventry. Once she had recovered from the initial shock of the thing, it did not make much difference to Flavia. She had very little converse with the rest of the form in any case. Shelmerdine, on the other hand, pined for the lively company of the twins and Alison. She did not even, to any great extent, seek solace in spending more time with Flavia. She liked Flavia well enough in her way, but felt that they had only a certain amount in common.

So she found herself, once again, "The Cat that Walked by Itself". It was only now she realised how unalone she had been since her arrival at Granchester and how little she actually enjoyed being alone, despite the fact that she had chosen to isolate herself from her fellows throughout most of her young life. The truth was that she was an intensely gregarious person, but she refused to compromise her standards for the sake of companionship. In the twins and Alison, and even, in her own way, in Flavia, she found, for the first time, companions with whom friendship involved no such compromise.

By the ending of the day, Shelmerdine was feeling so desolate that she might have cried; but it was many long years since her feelings had found release in tears. It was the first night since her arrival that the twins had not popped their heads around her curtain to say a last goodnight.

She recalled that she had been intending to return the sign to the Hare and Hounds that night, but she could not be bothered. "Let some one find it," she thought. "I don't care."

But as time wore on and sleep seemed impossible, Shelmerdine decided that she might as well take the air again as she had last night. Once again she dressed and slipped out by the same side door, but she had no intention of taking that heavy sign back into town. Instead she decided to wander down the valley gardens which she had not yet seen by moonlight. As she was rounding the house toward the head of the valley, she saw a figure up ahead moving silently about on one of the lawns, looking up at the windows of the School. It was Cara Leonie.

"Applestrudel! I wonder if I'm even luckier than I thought or whether she's out and about every night," thought Shelmerdine. "No wonder she always looks so frazzled. She probably never gets more than two hours sleep."

Shelmerdine found a shadowy corner and sank silently into a sitting position. She re-

maintained quite motionless as she watched Cara Leonie. It was difficult to tell exactly what she was doing. Possibly measuring the distance between one of the windows and a terrace which was level with it some three hundred yards away. It was not only what she was doing that fascinated Shelmerdine, but the way she was doing it. In school, her movements were always abrupt and nervy. Now she seemed almost like a different person: lithe, graceful, each movement flowing into the next with an almost animal fluidity. She covered the distance between the lawn and the terraces in a sort of loping run and then leapt lightly from one terrace to the next until she was in position. Once there she took from her pocket something that looked like a miniature telescope and focussed it on the School. Prob-

ably on the window that she had been examining before.

Suddenly it occurred to Shelmerdine that this would be an ideal opportunity to search Cara's room. During the day it was difficult to get near VI form quarters without being seen and it was always possible that Cara would be there.

Within minutes Shelmerdine was back in the house. She then made her way straight to the VI form corridor and found Cara's room. Silently, she turned the handle and began slowly opening the door.

"Who's that?" called a voice from within. It was unmistakably Cara's voice. Shelmerdine shut the door and cleared the corridor in seconds. The door did not re-open behind her.

"Curiouser and curiouser," thought Shelmerdine.

Correspondence

Mr. Fenwick's Confession

MADAM, I was interested to read Mr. Fenwick's letter on watching television as his opinions are very much in accordance with my own on this subject.

For me, the prospect of seeing an old film (to be safe I watch those films made before 1939) is both a thrilling and an exciting one. One can sit down to at least one hour's decent entertainment and be almost assured that one will not encounter bad language or anything of that sort.

Those who would worry about television monopolising the house need have no fear as there are few films and programmes being shown that are actually worth watching.

I would very much hope that Perfect Publications would consider publishing a guide to films and programmes as then one could be absolutely sure that one was watching the right sort of film.

YOUR SERVANT, MISS A. M. DONALD

MADAM, I have often considered writing to *The English Magazine*, but for some reason I have always been a little chary about doing just that. However at last I have decided to put nib to paper.

I read with interest Mr. S. T. Fenwick's "dark confession". He mentioned therein a particular "television programme" (if you will pardon my mentioning such a thing) entitled *Brideshead Revisited*. With this programme he found many faults, but failed to mention perhaps the one good feature it actually had. I am referring, of course, to its theme music. In

my opinion it is the most lovely piece of music, and is certainly worthy of at least a mention. If possible I shall try and have it played on "Much Winding" and perhaps then many more Romantics might be able to share my view. Until then I remain,

YOURS &c. MASTER K. DUFFY

We have not heard the music in question, but your letter raises an interesting point in relation to the argument of this issue's editorial. We said there that modern music could not cease to be subversive without ceasing to be modern; but that does not mean, of course, that no decent music is or can be written to-day. It is simply that when decent music is written today, it is not modern:—it is invariably written in the style of the last century, or of the earlier part of this. Curiously, most of the music written in a continuation of the "classical" style of the last century is written for films and television programmes. This is partly because such pieces are written not to conform to the fads of the "modern serious music" establishment, but to please the general public, who, while they may have been duped into liking "pop" music, cannot be induced to listen to the more pretentious cacophony of atonalism, and partly because such pieces are normally written to accompany films or programmes with a period theme, and so are "allowable" as supplying "period atmosphere".

The same definition of "modern" is applicable to painting. If I have a friend who paints still life in the classical style, no-one will call his work "modern art", even though it may have been painted yesterday. To say, therefore, that all modern art or music is subversive is not quite as sweeping a generalisation as that may sound. The term "modern" means (and is accepted to mean by others as well as ourselves) "imbued

with the subversive spirit of modernism". One may like or dislike that spirit; one may prefer terms like "liberated" or "revolutionary" or "exciting" to "subversive"; but the fact remains that all modern work is (in our terms) subversive, because if it is not subversive, then it is not modern. This is not a circular argument, it is simply a definition: just as one may say that all atheists disbelieve in God and that one who does not disbelieve in God is ipso facto not an atheist.

Etiquette

The Correct & the Excruciating

by Miss Lucinda Trill

I HAVE just been reading a book entitled *Miss Manners's Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behaviour* which has, surprisingly to my naïve and prejudiced mind, sold extremely well in the self-styled United States of America (the last word is actually spelled *behavior*, but it seems kinder to correct it). In fact, it is described as "a big best-seller": and indeed it is a big book—nine by six, 750 pages, print on the small side rather than otherwise (though not, I hasten to add, as small as that of certain magazines one could mention). It was not originally written as a book, but is a collection of answers to readers' questions published in *Miss Manners's* newspaper column which is syndicated throughout America, so it would seem that *Miss Manners's* doctrines are of interest to a considerable section of the Great American Public.

The title itself puts me in mind of a certain minor publisher who happened to be a staunch Protestant of the new-conservative type. This chap said in print that he had been, on a number of occasions, approached by people promoting works on the science of astrology, and declared that he always told them: "I can't do stuff on astrology. I find it incredibly evil." Rather fascinating, is it not, that word "incredibly"? Much material there for meditation. It is obviously quite out of place. One may believe that the lightest-hearted bit of nonsense about Capricorn and Sagittarius is fundamentally evil, because it goes against the revealed word of God (I do not believe it does, but some people may well think so)—but incredibly evil; like Jack the Ripper or the Hitler of modern mythology? Come now. No one thinks that; not even the strait-laced of Protestants. So why

was the word used? Behind the choice lies a complexity of factors subtler than may be immediately apparent. In the first place, our Protestant is trying, half-consciously, to prove that he is not strait-laced and old-fashioned. "Incredibly" is a nice, big, loose, imprecise, disproportionate, sixties-slangy word which says "I say you chaps, please don't misunderstand me; I may have 17th-century ideas, but I am still just a loose-mouthed post-hippie like the rest of you." Incredibly helps to dissipate the embarrassment felt by the modern person upon using the word *evil* in a doctrinal or religious way. It also has the virtue of personalising and de-doctrinalising the statement. After all, the modern world does not mind if you are quirky enough to feel a sense of "incredible evil" connected with astrology or cheese waffles or anything else. That only makes you seem neurotic, which is quite acceptable. The modern world only begins to sneer when it feels that you are calling something evil on authority and in deference to some principle outside and above yourself. The word "incredibly", no doubt thrown up on the spur of the moment and with no more than a fraction of a second's thought, is thus a quite subtle piece of instinctive back-peddalling from those aspects of the anti-astrology position which the modern mind finds most embarrassing. It is for the same reason that many evangelistic Protestants enjoy (or pretend to enjoy) using words like "outreach" and employ first names with an obsessiveness even more frenzied than that of the modern world as a whole.

The word "Excruciatingly" in the title of this book is no doubt the product of considerable thought and calculation, but it serves very much the same function: not so much to spare personal embarrassment on the part of the authoress or the publishers, as to tame, liberalise and jocularise the dread words "Correct Behaviour". When we open the front cover, the first words that meet our eyes are these:—

DEAR MISS MANNERS:

Who says there is a "right" way of doing things and a "wrong"?

GENTLE READER:

Miss Manners does. You want to make something of it?

It is an old joke. Essentially the same as the heavy-handed German witticism "Be my brother or I'll punch you in the head", but again, it speaks volumes. The question is one that most modern people have been trained to ask for a century now, whenever ideas of right and wrong ways of doing things arise. The answer is α) to turn it into a joke, β) to bring it

onto the level of purely personal preference and γ) to reassure every one by proving that Miss Manners is as capable of being unmanly, unwomanly and modern as the rest of "us".

This is not, we would assure our readers, the tone of the book as a whole. These are merely the carefully-contrived reassurances which stand, as it were, at the portals of a volume which, on the whole, takes manners quite seriously; and from the tone of the book, it is evident that what most of Miss Manners's readers want is a serious guide to etiquette. Not sober—often light-hearted—but certainly serious as a guide to etiquette. There is a certain amount of horseplay, but it is rarely as laboured as these opening gambols, which are, perhaps, partly for the benefit of friends, relations and people who see one reading the book on the train; and perhaps also perform the function of a preliminary giggle and a spot of air-clearing which would once have been necessary before a discussion of some embarrassing subject like—well, the sort of thing one cannot discuss in *The English Magazine*.

What of the content? It is generally pretty sound. In some cases much more so than Debreth's *Etiquette and Modern Manners*, a book which, obviously, cannot take refuge in buffoonery and which tries instead to show how "modern" and "unstuffy" it is by every device from unjustified right-hand margins and funny little empty squares marking each paragraph to liberal attitudes on a range of social matters. Miss Manners is permitted by her persona as a rather prim preceptress to express, for example, a distaste for extra-marital improprieties which no modern writer dare express unaffectedly in *propria persona*. Debreth, for example, accepts them unreservedly and makes strained attempts to integrate the recognition of them into the English social code.

Miss Manners is soundish to sound on a number of things and often makes delightful reading. She laments the passing of white gloves, for example, and often waxes eloquent on the passing of fine things from the world:—

It is some years since the notion got abroad that summer clothing should be less restrictive than winter clothing, because the weather tends to be warmer in summer. Before that people used to look crisp and correct in the heat, although of course they were dropping like flies. Now look at them. Good taste in light clothing means not wearing a T-shirt on which a licentious invitation to the general public is spelled out across the chest.

On white gloves themselves:

For those who missed this era, it may be necessary to explain that white gloves were a hand co-

vering. There were white gloves of various lengths for various occasions, but the ones for summer were what was called wrist length, and they were properly worn every time one stepped out of one's house . . . then there was the matter of when the gloves were to be worn, when they were to be carried, and when it was appropriate to do one of each. This fascinating and complicated problem kept a great many people worried and anxious who might otherwise have applied these emotions to such problems as "Am I really happy?" or "Is this the real me?"

As Miss Manners observes, "Elegance in fashion did not decline: it stopped short the day Worth stopped providing wardrobes to the heroines of Henry James's novels, who travelled seasonally to Paris for this purpose."

Miss Manners does not suggest unilateral revivals of white gloves or of many other things, but she certainly strongly advocates the retention of almost any civilised usage which might reasonably be said still to exist, many of which retentions may well amount to revivals in most cases. Her terminology, also, is quietly corrective. For example, in whatever terms a female correspondent may refer to her hosiery, Miss Manners markedly refers to stockings in her reply.

Her corrective remarks on bad modern habits are often delightful. To the reader who asks what should be done with the tissue after one has blown one's nose in public or at a friend's house, she replies:—

For such occasions you employ a cloth tissue. A clever little invention which is a square of cotton or linen that may be conveniently carried in the pocket and re-used throughout the day. One should never begin the day without a fresh one of these concealed about one's person. Consider, for example, the difference this would make if you had occasion to weep in front of others. Weeping into paper is disgusting; weeping into fine linen is romantic drama.

As in the case of stockings, readers' references to "tissues" are always quietly but firmly replied to with references to handkerchiefs.

As might be expected, Miss Manners is staunchly republican and inveighs against the practice of American women's courtseying to royalty and likewise against any adoption of the English use of knife and fork. Her argument against the latter, however, is so charming that the means almost justify the end:

American table manners are, if anything, a more advanced form of civilised behaviour than the European, because they are more complicated and further removed from the practical result, always

FOR MIRE-LESS WIRELESS
INSIST ON IMPERIAL

a sign of refinement. One switches the fork from left hand to right every time a single piece of meat is cut . . . an elaborate, time-consuming, and therefore impressive procedure.

To a correspondent who rejects both English and American styles of eating in favour of a simpler middle course of his own (the sort of thing used by most careless eaters), Miss Manners replies:

You, sir, are an anarchist and Miss Manners is frightened to have anything to do with you.

It is true that questioning the table manners of others is rude. But to overthrow the accepted conventions of society, on the flimsy grounds that you have found them silly, inefficient and discomforting, is a dangerous step toward destroying civilisation.

So, alas, is republicanism itself; and wherever modish political preoccupations rear their heads, Miss Manners's tragic flaw asserts itself. She argues vigorously and at length, for example, in favour of the use of the absurd "Ms.", an argument much at odds with the tone of the rest of the book. And when it comes to jolly old "racism 'n' sexism" she suddenly turns from prim preceptress to carbon-copy late-20th-century Yankee liberal:

If a nonmember [of a "minority group"] slurs a group without knowing that you are a member or have some other close connexion, you may convey this information ("perhaps you don't know that my wife is black"). In this case there is no need to emphasise it with angry behaviour [!]. The statement is more devastating if given in a simple factual way.

I recall, in one of Stephen Potter's immortal *One Upmanship* books, a diagram showing how one should sit down, after a joke about a lame man had been told, in such a way as to imply that one was lame oneself. Like most readers, I was much amused, but I scarcely dreamed I should see the day when a writer—far less a writer with pretensions to being an authority on etiquette—should seriously advocate such caddish tactics being employed in real life. But all, it seems, is fair in the cause of multi-racial bigotry.

The authoress assures us that there is no effective recovery from this "devastating" gambit unless one can prove one is black or miscegenating oneself. The present writer can think of a number of amusing rejoinders which would turn such self-righteous posturing on its head, but, of course, the assumption is that the company will consist of cathode-soaked brainwashees who will regard any such rejoinder in guilt-ridden silence. To forestall any of our own readers from writing for advice

as to what to do under such circumstances, we would say simply: avoid the company of cathode-soaked brainwashees.

How serious Miss Manners is about this sort of thing is hard to tell. She advises a member of a "slurred" "group" (which may include women as a whole, for example) to "walk haughtily out of the room, or enquire menacingly 'just what do you mean by that?'" adding "Not enough women take advantage of this opportunity." How quickly the mask of manners slips when the square-eyed brainwashee shows through. Is Miss Manners seriously advocating a course of action which is bullying and ugly in a man and in a woman merely ridiculous? We cannot say. Point nine of a list of do's and don't's (well, a list of don't's, actually) on jokes about "minorities" (a curious term which, including all women and all children as well as all who are not "Anglo-Saxon" or Protestant, comprises a large majority of all Americans) sums up the position as follows:

9. The only truly safe and proper subject for a joke is oneself. Many a person who thought this privilege extended to his or her spouse, parent or child, has lived to find otherwise.

Clearly we are in the realm of self-parody here, the only question being: is it conscious or unconscious? That is a question one often finds oneself asking about modern people, and it is sad—though, sadly, not surprising—to find oneself asking it about Miss Manners.

What is surprising—or at least extremely interesting—is that large numbers of Americans should want serious discussion and advice on the question of correct behaviour and that they should find that want satisfied by one who is, much of the time—whenever, in fact, her liberal knee is not jerking—a counsellor considerably sounder than one could reasonably have hoped for. Like so many things these days, it would seem to be a hopeful sign of the times and a propitious portent for the new century.

In the middle of Hell was an abyss of shadows; Lucifer was thrown into it loaded with chains and black vapours spread around him. I learnt that Lucifer was to be unchained for a time, 50 or 60 years before the year 2000, if I am not mistaken. VISIONS OF ANNE CATHERINE

EMMERICH (1774-1823)

There is no telling how far men can go astray in great periods of social decay. TALLEYRAND

KINGSTOWN, NOT DUNLEARY

INSIST ON IMPERIAL

Record Reviews

The Latest Music by Pippit

PIPPY-HO, you marchands. I bet you are wondering just what jinks I have up my sleeve today, nestling against the delicately-edged cambric handkerchief. Well, how would you feel if I told you that today's lecture was going to be about thermodynamic trigonometry? I thought so. So would I. So let's skip that and get on to the very newest syncopations.

Have you ever heard of Neovox? Neovox is a new voice in the music recording business (tee-hee-hee, ha-ha-ha, ho-ho-ho-ho; ah, me!). Well, not that new, akth, but I could not resist the gag. I thought it was funny, anyway.

Yes, well, never mind. Neovox are plipping out all sorts of jinky things, and here is one of them: The Complete Works of Ruth Etting. There. That Stopped you hooting, didn't it? And I jolly well mean it, too. The Complete Works of Ruth Etting. Everything that wonderful warblerette ever warbled. I suppose there is not much more to say really. If you know Ruth Etting you will be writing your cheques rather than reading the rest of this review. If you don't, here is the perfect means to rectify the matter. The set, at present, runs to seven, and I have heard three of them, covering 1926-27, 1930-31 and 1931. It is enchanting to hear Miss Etting rendering a number of Bing's latest songs, such as "Out of Nowhere" and "Just One More Chance" as well as toppers like "Body and Soul" and some that are so new you have probably not heard them yet. A particularly jolly one is "So Is Your Old Lady"; corking tune but the theme is a bit—well, you will not ever hear it on the Home Service, I shouldn't think. Pippit has heard Vols. I, VI and VII and awards them the Pippit Seal of Approval.

Next from Neovox, something most unusual. Marion Harris, 1916-1919. Miss Harris is a popular singer in what might be called the proto-post-war style. I mean, here she is, singing "I Ain't Got Nobody" and songs with titles like "My Syncopated Melody Man" and "Jazz Baby", but all before the Jazz Age, before the Charleston and mostly before the end of that dreadful War. It is a curious sound:—sometimes very modern, sometimes almost Edwardian (in an American sort of way). A curiosity, certainly. Things have changed so much in the last few years that this sounds

almost like another world. And then again, not. You will have to try it to form your own conclusions.

Neovox once more, and this time bang up to date, with 1920s Songs and Singers. Not the usual collection of singers always in the public eye, but some unusual chaps and chapettes who may be quite unfamiliar, at least to an English audience: Esther Walker, The Happiness Boys, Vaughn de Leath (a girl, and rather ripping) and Dolly Kaye, to name but a few; and to name one more, Annette Hanshaw singing two songs, one of which, "Ready for the River" is a sort of musical suicide note. You won't hear that on the Home Service either! So, if you want to know what is new across the Atlantic, apart from the things every one knows about, this is the proggie to pick.

All Neovox material is on cassette-tapes (or should that be tape-cassettes?) only, and can be a bit diffie to get in shops, so order direct from: Neovox Record Co., 14, Regent Road, Birmingham, Warwickshire. The good thing is, they are kept permanently "in print", rather than disappearing from the shelves three days after they are issued, the way some more commercial releases seem to. All proggies are £5-19s-0d including postage ("first class postage", it says here, whatever that may mean), so you will give the nice man a shilling tip and write £6-0-0 on your cheque, will not you?

Funny, is not it? They used to charge one shilling over the pound and make it a guinea, now they seem to do the reverse. I blame American Advertising Men. Really I do.

AND now Pippit is about to do something she has never done before. Dive 500 feet from a springy board into an eyebath filled with soda-water. No. I have changed my mind. I am going to do something even more daring. I am going to review three—what does it say they are?)—oh, yes—three compact discs. I hope none of you types are going to let me down by pronouncing the word "compact". I mean, every one knows that "compact" is the noun and "compact" is the adjective. At least they used to; but with all these newspapers and new-style schools and wireless sets, people are not ignorant the way they used to be. They are much more completely ignorant now. That is progress.

Anyoldway, down to these compact discs. Have you ever seen them before? They are quite jolly, actually. About 4½ inches in diameter and shiny silver all over, yet cunningly wrought so as to catch every tint of the jolly old rainbow, and if they have a nice design on,

as the Saville ones in particular do they are actually rather attractive in an Art Deco sort of way. Better than those gonky great bendy records, anyway. Of course, the things you play them on look like something out of the late 20th century; but perhaps you can get a cabinet-maker to put one in a decent case for you.

According to the press release, I am supposed to tell you about the refined new recording technique which gives a warmer sound than the usual compact disc. Well, the probbiepoo is that α) (as those learned types say) I have never heard a compact disc before and β) by the time it has been recorded onto a tape and played through my 1931 wireless set, which is the only way I can hear them, these nuances may be a spot lost. In any case, why would we be wanting to talk about the technicalities? It is the music you chaps are interested in, what-what?

The music, then. And we begin with that remarkable, sophisticated young man who has taken the London Stage by storm as actor, director, singer, songwriter, playwright, musician and wit. And if I tell you that his first name makes you think of Christmas and his second of modern conservatism, you will know that I am speaking of Mr. Noël Coward.

This shiny, entitled Noël Coward, *Classic Recordings 1928-1938* (Happy Days, CDHD 168) is really a sort of Selected Works consisting of songs from all those wonderful shows of the last ten years. Here is the heart-rending "I'll See You Again" from *Bitter Sweet* (do you remember that enchanting fade-out at the end of Miss Anna Neagle's film version?). Here are "The Stately Homes of England" from *Operette*, "Half-Caste Woman" from *Cochran's 1931 Revue*. Here are "Dance Little Lady", "Mad Dogs and Englishmen", "Poor Little Rich Girl" (Mr. Coward's first real song hit, remember?). 18 songs in all, and all rendered in the most impeccable modern taste, rather than in the slightly grooshy versions that Mr. C. made of some of them back in the '70s, '60s and '50s. Did I say 18 songs? Really 26, because one is a medley of 9 songs, including a rare snatch of that rather decadent *fin de siècle* piece "Green Carnations". It is left out of most performances of *Bitter Sweet*, and I had only seen the lyrics in print before. The sleeve-note credits "these more enlightened times" with its inclusion here. Apparently the disc was made in the 1990s, which is a bit like being printed in Cairo; but really, there is nothing dreadful in "Green Carnations". Apparently it was the way they did it at that first performance in 1929. So we must thank the 1990s for a

bit of 1890s charm from our own decade.

Dorothy Lamour, *On A Tropic Night* (Movie Stars, CMSCD 009) gives us 20 songs from the exotic Miss Lamour. She is most usually associated with her 1940s work, especially the wonderful "Road" films with Bob Hope and Bing Crosby, but this proggie consists entirely of slightly more modern songs from between 1937 and 1939—though two of them did appear (can songs "appear"? Bothered if I will say "feature"!) in *Road to Singapore*. Miss Lamour is as sultry as ever, with some charming songs, quite the oddest of which is "That Sentimental Sandwich", which contains the immortal lines:—

*I'm hungry for something,
Not for lobster, not for wine;
That sentimental sandwich
That was yours and mine.*

And again:—

*Gee, we were poor,
And though fate has changed our scenery,
Gee, the allure
Of that broken-down old beanery.*

Who dare say that popular lyrics cannot scale the giddy days of High Art, what?

But what, Pippit wonders, is an old beanery? It sounds like a gentlemen's club from a Wodehouse yarn.

Pippit's favourite shiny of the month is:—*Singin' in the Rain*: *Famous Stage and Screen Personalities* (Saville CDSVL 209) and the excellent news is that you can get this one on bendy (SVL 209) and tape-cassette (CSVL 209) too. The sleeve is spiffing, with photographs of all the 19 singers represented (worth getting the bendy just to see them at full size!)—Alice Faye, Dick Powell, Ruth Etting, Jack Buchanan, Frances Langford, Cliff Edwards—better known as Ukelele Ike, who provided the voice for Jimminy Cricket in Mr. Disney's *Pinocchio* and on this proggie favours us with a memorable rendering of "Singin' in the Rain".

The shiny disc looks charming, because the good design actually complements its rain-bow-ness and makes it look quite neo-traditional (which just shows how things could be done). The sleeve notes themselves are worth reading and even (pinch yourself) sound. Listen to this:

It is only comparatively recently, with the ever-decreasing standard of quality of modern popular (so-called) "music", that a large percentage of today's public, young and not-so-young, all searching for something a little more adult (and less aggressive!), have come to appreciate the intrinsic musical value of these old songs, more so now than even by those who, at the time, listened to the [wireless] and bought the records.

I know it does not construe (it was written from the 1990s, after all) but his heart is in the right place, is it not? I also warmed to his description of Miss Binnie Hale's charming rendering of "As Time Goes By" as being "a good 11 years' before Bogart's repeated instruction to 'play it again, Sam' in the film *Casablanca*." I am sure this sleeve-writer is enough of an expert to know that Mr. Bogart did not actually say those words in the film, but rather than superciliously pointing it out, he quietly perpetuates the popular myth. Spot on. That is what popular myths are for (unless they are dull, malevolent ones, like evolution, or German genocide, in which case it is more amusing to explode them). The fact that Mr. Bogart did not say "play it again, Sam" should provide an amusing moment in a quiz or at a dinner table and then be utterly set aside in favour of the more normal fact that he did.

So here we have 20 delightful songs (yes, I did say 19 photographs—ten girls, nine boys, Fred Astaire sings twice) in a collection which receives the P. S. of A. on all counts.

Receipt

Bosworth Jumbles

ALTHOUGH the first written references to jumbles date only from Elizabethan times, tradition has it that they were the forte of Richard III's chef, and the receipt is held to have passed from the last of the Plantagenets to the first of the Tudors by being found upon the very battlefield of Bosworth after Richard's army had been destroyed by Henry Tudor in 1485.

The name derives from "gemmel", a twin finger ring, because early jumbles were often made in the shape of two interlaced rings. The almond-flavoured version gained popularity in the 17th century. Jumbles are held to be best enjoyed when served with Madeira or a sweet wine, as they were at Georgian and early Victorian card parties.

RECEIPT FOR ABOUT 12 JUMBLES

5 oz self-raising flour 4 oz butter
4 oz caster sugar 1 oz rice flour ½ beaten egg
½ teaspoon almond essence

Mix flours and sugar together and rub in butter with the fingers until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in egg and almond essence, and knead for about one minute into a smooth dough.

Roll the dough into a panel ¼ in. thick and 4-5 ins. wide. Cut across the panel into ¾ in. strips. With floured hands, tie loosely into

knots or form rings.

Place the jumbles well spaced out on a greased and floured baking-tray. Bake in the pre-heated oven for about ten minutes, turning the tray after five minutes if necessary.

You can replace 1 oz. of flour with 1 oz. of ground almonds to give a closer texture and a distinctive, nutty taste.

Words

Avoiding Bad Language

I SUPPOSE we have all been in the position from time to time of chatting blithely away about this and that when suddenly one stops short, a fevered dew upon the brow and the words lodged somewhere half-way up the vocal cords, for one has come upon a word which one cannot possibly pronounce. I am not referring to words like "chthonic" or "Quetzalcoatl", but to expressions like—well—ahem—"British Telecom" or—gulp—"shopping centre". You see what I mean? In cold print one can just about squeeze them out, but in actual performance—well, you couldn't, could you?

In cases like this, old Baden-Powell was definitely working on the right lines when he advised his little chaps to be prepared. There are two ways of so being: 1) where possible, one must know the correct form to use; 2) where not, one must be psychologically ready to substitute a civilised alternative for any rot that may arise.

Centres of all sorts are a bugbear: "shopping centres" may be called bazaars or arcades. "Garden centres" are gardeners' suppliers. The word is idiotically used. We know of a tiny Irish greengrocer's shop—hardly more than a kiosk—which styles itself "The North-West Fruit and Vegetable Centre". Traditionalist Roman Catholics who are forced to say the Tridentine Mass in places other than churches refer to such places as *Mass centres*! Why do people who uphold tradition in one area so often seem eager to attack it in all others?

Grooshy foodstuffs are somewhat tamed by not referring them by the usual over-familiarisms. If one must refer to them at all: For (yik) quiche, say at least *Quiche Lorraine*, or, far better, *cheese flan*. For youghourt, say *Bulgarian curds*, or simply *curds*. For *Pizza* use the full form, *Pizza pie*. "*Kiwi fruit*" is an idiocy invented by some New Zealand Marketing Board. They are properly called *Chinese gooseberries*.

Loose-mouthed terms for things which have perfectly good names include *Handset* (meaning the part of a telephone which you lift) for *receiver* and *minibus* for a *motor-charabanc*.